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NEXT STOP PIMLICO FOR UNBEATEN DERBY HERO JUSTIFY

JUSTIFY (1st)/SOLOMINI (10th) – The 144th Kentucky Derby winner was full of energy this morning and Hall of Fame trainer **Bob Baffert** has every intention of heading to Baltimore for the May 19 Preakness Stakes (GI), the second leg of racing's Triple Crown. Baffert led undefeated **Justify** out of his barn shortly after 8 a.m. for a photo opportunity and the Scat Daddy colt looked ready to run another 10 furlongs, tossing his head for photographers and refusing to settle down.

"He looks phenomenal today," Baffert said. "He's full of himself. He knows he's a stud. He came back and he really wasn't that tired. He ate up last night and today he's been a handful. When I got him out of the stall he was pulling me around; usually they're a little bit tired."

The now-five-time Derby-winning trainer woke up still in awe of Justify's 2 1/2-length win, an instantly legendary effort for the way he finished full of run despite jockey **Mike Smith** tracking a pace that included the sixth-fastest opening quarter-mile in the race's history (:22.24).

"It was just an awesome performance," Baffert said. "We were hoping he had that in him. At the three-eighths pole I thought, man, he better be a really good horse. We saw another gear that we hadn't seen yet. That's where the greatness comes in. He's got that big, long stride and he's just so efficient, he does it so easily."

Baffert relayed that when Preakness officials called this morning to extend an invitation he didn't qualify his response in any way. He'll be there.

"I didn't tell them, 'I'll think about it,' Baffert said. "We'll take it day by day but today there's no reason to say no."

Justify – owned by **China Horse Club International Ltd., Head of Plains Partners, Starlight Racing & WinStar Farm LLC** – will remain at Churchill Downs until the middle of next week. He will likely have three days of walking the shedrow before returning to the track Wednesday morning. Assistant trainer **Jimmy Barnes** will supervise the Louisville string until Baffert returns to town next weekend.

Although Baffert is a six-time Preakness winner and has never lost the middle jewel with a Derby winner he takes nothing for granted when it comes to Triple Crown prospects.

"I'm not thinking about that at all, not yet," he said. "Right now I'm just thinking about keeping him healthy. We still have another one in a couple of weeks if all's well. We won the toughest and most important one. If he wins the Preakness then we'll see."

Baffert's refusal to contemplate a 13th Triple Crown sweep won't stop pundits and fans from spending the next two weeks obsessing over it. Baffert trained the last one, **American Pharoah**, in 2015, and speaks of Justify with similar reverence.

"For a horse to do what he's done he has to be really great," Baffert said.

Baffert also reported that **Solomini** – who finished 10th under **Flavien Prat** as the fourth-longest choice at 62-1 – came back in good order and could turn up in the Triple Crown's third leg.

"He gave him the **Calvin Borel** ride – let him back, put him on the rail – and he beat half of them. We're thinking he might be a horse for the Belmont."

GOOD MAGIC (2nd) – **GOOD MAGIC** – e **Five Racing Thoroughbreds & Stonestreet Stables LLC's Good Magic** loomed a threat approaching the quarter pole but was never able to reach **Justify**. Even after the eventual winner put him away, last year's champion 2-year-old ran on determinedly to hold the place spot.

"It felt like this horse was coming into the race by far the best we'd ever seen him," trainer **Chad Brown** said. "He was by far our best chance going in but it just happened that it was one of the strongest fields we've seen in a long time."

Brown was very pleased with the decision-making of Eclipse Award winner **Jose Ortiz**. Trainer and jockey had agreed that Justify was the horse to beat and that they couldn't let him get too far in front of them even if it meant pushing a bit faster than they'd like.

"I could feel their confidence and I could feel all week that they thought their horse was so much the best," Brown said. "We kept Justify in close range."

Coming to the quarter-pole Ortiz wanted an opening that **Bolt d'Oro** beat him to, leaving Good Magic no choice but to go around horses.

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"It probably cost us a couple lengths but I still can't imagine a scenario where Justify wouldn't have still been able to fend us off, how strong he was in the stretch," Brown said. "That's one critical part of the race but not the deciding factor. Other than that, though, that's a pretty good trip for the Derby."

Brown was pleased with what he saw from Good Magic this morning and said the Curlin colt will return to his Belmont Park base on Monday along with his other most recognizable names that raced at Churchill Downs the first week of the meet.

"He came out of the race real well," Brown said. "We just took him out of the stall for a jog and he's sound, which is a relief in a race like that, with a sealed track and all. He looks really good."

As for the remainder of the Triple Crown, no decisions will be made until Brown gets a chance to observe how Good Magic bounces back over the next week.

"I want him back in New York and that gives me time to decide what's next," Brown said. "I want to provide the owners with as much information as possible about what I see and then let them decide. You run a horse back in two weeks off an effort like this, even if he's not going to run for a while, it doesn't mean it's good for the horse long-term. That said, his sire came back in two weeks and won the Preakness."

Regardless of the Preakness, a Belmont run is highly unlikely.

"Whether we run in the Preakness will have no bearing on the Belmont," Brown said. "I don't see a mile-and-a-half for this horse."

AUDIBLE (3rd)/ VINO ROSSO (9th)/NOBLE INDY (17th)/ MAGNUM MOON (19th) – Trainer **Todd Pletcher** was palpating legs at Barn 40 at Churchill Downs Sunday morning, looking for heat or other issues among the 18 runners he had brought to the Louisville track for Derby Week. After he finished up, he chatted with a small media gathering about Saturday's Kentucky Derby 144 and how it unfolded for his four colts – **Audible, Magnum Moon, Noble Indy** and **Vino Rosso**.

"I went back and watched Audible's race several times and I'm even more impressed with his effort," the conditioner said. "He couldn't adjust to the track to start and was having a hard time dealing with the kickback. But when **Javier (Castellano)** got him running, he was really coming on. All things considered, he ran really well."

"Vino Rosso just didn't like the track; not at all. We had to flush a lot of dirt and mud out of all their eyes last night, but I don't ever remember flushing more mud out of a horse's eyes that we did with him. We were still flushing it out this morning. Magnum Moon had issues away from the gate – they did some bumper car things away from there – and then he never got in a rhythm with it. He was struggling with the track, too. Noble Indy got the trip we wanted, he just wasn't up to it in the end."

Pletcher tipped his cap to the Derby winner. "**Justify** is a super impressive horse," he offered succinctly.

His four Derby runners were headed to New York Monday along with the majority of the stable's Churchill Downs horses. A plane and two vans had been lined up to ferry the string north, primarily to Belmont Park.

As to future assignments for the Derby quartet?

"I'll have to talk to the owners concerning them," Pletcher said, "but in the case of Vino Rosso we'll almost assuredly go for the Belmont (Stakes on June 9). **Vinny (Viola of St. Elias Stable)** and **Mike (Repole of Repole Stable)** are New York guys and winning the Belmont is something they want to do. The horse is bred for it and he'll be going there. I think with Magnum Moon (owned by **Lawana** and **Robert Low**), we're going to give him a break and freshen him up. We'll figure out plans for Audible (owned by **China Horse Club International, Head of Plains Partners, Starlight Racing** and **WinStar Farm**) and Noble Indy (owned by **WinStar Farm** and **Repole Stable**)."

Pletcher said he had hopes for a plane to his New York base later in the day.

INSTILLED REGARD (4th) – **OXO Equine's Instilled Regard**, a fast-closing fourth Saturday is headed for a 30-day freshening at Taylor Made Farm in Central Kentucky according to **Christina Jelm**, assistant to trainer **Jerry Hollendorfer**.

"He has had a pretty strenuous eight-race schedule and there are plenty of races this summer like Haskell (GI) and Travers (GI)," Jelm said. "He might do something like he did with **Battle of Midway** last year. But that's up to Jerry and Larry (owner **Lawrence Best**)."

Battle of Midway finished third in last year's Derby and completed 2017 with a victory in the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (GI) at Del Mar.

Hollendorfer was at the barn at 3:30 this morning to check on his Derby runner before catching a flight back to California. Jelm said Instilled Regard came out of the race fine and "looked like he wanted to go around again."

MY BOY JACK (5th) – Trainer **Keith Desormeaux** held his charge **My Boy Jack** as his groom soaped him down outside Barn 25 Derby Sunday morning at 7:30. He reflected on the Creative Cause colt's fifth-place effort in Kentucky Derby 144 the day before.

"We had a tough go of it in some ways," he said. "He got stopped cold near the three-eighths pole. He had some cuts on his front legs and got banged on some. I think he got rapped by another horse's leg when that happened."

“But I’m not really complaining. We have to accept that sort of thing is eligible to happen in a 20-horse field. You can’t get away from it.

“Even so, he came back on strong; made a good late run. I already had a lot of respect for him, but after yesterday I’ve got even more. He’s grown into a heckuva racehorse.”

The trainer was asked what he thought was next for the dark-hued soph owned by the three-way partnership of **Don’t Tell My Wife Stable, Monomoy Stables** and **West Point Thoroughbreds**.

“I think he’s got to get a little break,” he said. “He’s had three tough races in six weeks and that might be enough for now. If he’d gotten close yesterday – say run second – I might have thought about pushing on him and considered the Preakness (two weeks hence). But that’s not going to happen. We’ll take him home (to his Southern California base) and see what’s next.”

Desormeaux has a plane to California Monday. His horse will follow by air Tuesday.

BRAVAZO (6th) – Calumet Farm’s Bravazo came out of his sixth-place finish in the Derby well and may have earned a trip to the Preakness Stakes in two weeks off that effort.

“He ran beyond our expectations,” Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas** said Sunday morning. “He was very much in contention at the eighth pole. When you get a 20-horse field and that kind of track, it changes the whole race. It compromises some and helps others. I was pleased with his effort, real pleased.”

When asked about taking Bravazo to the Preakness, Lukas replied, “Yes, probably. I’ll talk to (Calumet Farm owner) **Brad Kelley**. He’s pretty game. I’d say we’ll probably go.”

Lukas and Kelley teamed to win the 2013 Preakness with 15-1 longshot **Oxbow**, who had also finished sixth in the Kentucky Derby that year.

HOFBURG (7th) – Juddmonte Farms’ Hofburg was doing well Sunday morning following his eventful seventh-place finish in Derby 144.

“I thought he ran well yesterday,” trainer **Bill Mott** said. “He was good going into the first turn and didn’t get blocked. In the second turn, he was about eight lengths back and two horses stopped at the same time and he (**Irad Ortiz Jr.**) couldn’t get around and had to steady. All of a sudden we were 12-15 lengths back.

“But that is what happens in a 20-horse field. That’s horse racing. If he can get the **Calvin Borel** rail trip, he’d be right there.”

Mott said it was undetermined if Hofburg would stay here or go to New York to join the trainer’s main string where the Belmont Stakes (GI) looms in five weeks.

“Naturally we have to think about the Belmont,” said Mott of a race he won in 2010 with **Drosselmeyer**.

LONE SAILOR (8th) – G M B Racing’s Lone Sailor settled back in at trainer **Tom Amoss’** Barn 29 at Churchill Downs following his eighth-place effort in Saturday’s Kentucky Derby.

“We’re really proud of our horse,” Amoss said. “**Justify** ran a great race.”

Lone Sailor was ridden by **James Graham** who made his first start in the Kentucky Derby.

“It was a lot of fun,” Graham said. “We got a little unlucky but that was so cool to experience that.”

FIRENZE FIRE (11th) – Trainer Jason Servis was happy Sunday morning with how **Mr. Amore Stable’s Firenze Fire** exited Saturday’s Kentucky Derby and with his 11th-place showing.

“He gave us a thrill. It looked like he was going to make a little run there, but it was too far for him,” Servis said. “I’ll meet with (owner/breeder) **Ron (Lombardi)** and regroup and shorten him up a little.”

Firenze Fire is scheduled to ship to Belmont Park Sunday afternoon.

BOLT d’ORO (12th) – Ruis Racing LLC’s Bolt d’Oro came out of his 12th-place finish in Saturday’s Kentucky Derby in good order and scoped clean.

The son of Medaglia d’Oro is scheduled to ship back to owner/trainer **Mick Ruis’** Santa Anita stable Tuesday with the Pacific Classic (GI) at Del Mar in August his main goal.

“He’s walking fine and he ate up last night,” assistant trainer **Aimee Dollase** said.

Bolt d’Oro, who finished second behind **Justify** in the Santa Anita Derby, chased the pace before fading in the stretch.

FLAMEAWAY (13th) – Trainer Mark Casse reported Sunday morning that **Flameaway** is doing well after his 13th-place finish in the Kentucky Derby.

“He was running well, and **Jose (Lezcano)** said at the half-mile pole he kind of acted funny,” Casse said. “And then I watched the replay, he stayed on his left lead until about the eighth pole, and when he switched to his right lead he took a funny step, or I think he may have been just exhausted. But when we got him back last night he was fine, so I’m hoping he’ll be OK.”

Flameaway will remain at Churchill Downs for the time being while Casse discusses options for his next race with owner **John Oxley**. Casse said the likely plan is to point for the Queen's Plate on June 30.

"He's a Canadian bred, so if all goes well I would probably give him one start before the Queen's Plate. He'll probably go to Woodbine I don't know, it's still early and I want to talk to the Oxleys and hear their thoughts. If we are going to try and win the Queen's Plate I think him being at Woodbine would make the most sense."

ENTICED (14th) – Godolphin LLC's Enticed exited his 14th-place finish in Saturday's Kentucky Derby with only "a couple of little nicks.

"It was just a rough run race with 20 horses and a lot of bumping going on," said **Neal McLaughlin**, trainer **Kiaran McLaughlin's** brother and assistant trainer Sunday morning. "He caught a couple of little nicks but nothing bad. He ate up last night and everything looks good."

Enticed is scheduled to ship to Saratoga Sunday afternoon and is unlikely to run in the Preakness (GI) at Pimlico in two weeks.

"I would be doubtful. If we had run 1-2 in the Derby we'd look to run back in the Preakness. Otherwise, it's too quick back," McLaughlin said. "The Travers would be the main goal; it's just looking for the best spot to get him there," he added. "We'll look at the Belmont and how it comes up and how many horses are left standing."

PROMISES FULFILLED (15th)/FREE DROP BILLY (16th) – Bob Baron's Promises Fulfilled led the Kentucky Derby field through a half-mile but retreated to finish 15th while stablemate, **Albaugh Family Stables' Free Drop Billy**, finished one spot behind in 16th.

"They're both fine," trainer **Dale Romans** said. "We're obviously disappointed but we'll be back."

COMBATANT (17th) – Winchell Thoroughbreds and Willis Horton's Combatant came out of his 18th-place finish in the Derby well according to assistant trainer **Scott Blasi**, who was overseeing the Churchill Downs string Sunday morning while Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen** traveled to Texas to saddle **Bee Jersey** and **South Beach** in the \$200,000 Steve Sexton Mile (GIII) at Lone Star Park.

No next-race plans were pending for Combatant, who was making his fifth start of the year in the Derby.

"It's time to regroup," Blasi said.

Derby Day wasn't a total loss for Asmussen, who won the 8,000th race of his career when **Lookin At Lee** captured the third race. He added one more win at Churchill and three more at Lone Star Park Saturday to bring his career total to 8,004 going into Sunday. He is second on the all-time list of North American trainers to the late **Dale Baird**, who has 9,445.

MENDELSSOHN (20th) – Michael Tabor, Mrs. John Magnier and Derrick Smith's Kentucky Derby (GI) runner Mendelssohn loaded onto a Sallee Horse Van on Sunday morning at 8:50 en route to a flight back to his Ballydoyle base in County Tipperary, Ireland. Head traveling lad **Pat Keating** reported "He's fine; all's good," the morning after an eventful run that saw him finish last of 20 runners on a sloppy track.

The son of Scat Daddy encountered two tough moments in the running: a hard bump at the start, losing valuable position, and then again at the beginning of the first turn, forcing him wide.

Trainer **Aidan O'Brien** confirmed that the Breeders' Cup Classic (GI) over the same course and distance is the long-term goal after a brief rest.

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